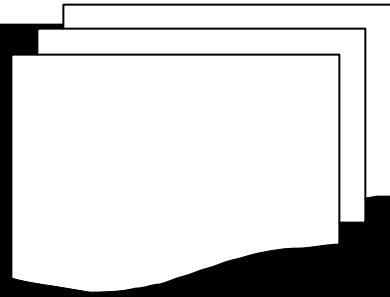


the physical disability FILE



information for and about people with physical disabilities

Preventing Assault and Abuse

How big a problem is physical abuse and sexual assault of people with physical disabilities? Where can people with physical disabilities get information about how to protect themselves?

According to a study in 1994, women with physical disabilities are more likely than other women to be victims of domestic violence (*Sobsey, 1994*). The abuse is often more severe, resulting in more chronic injuries. Other studies have shown that men with disabilities also experience a higher rate of abuse than their non-disabled counterparts.

The data about sexual assault is just as alarming. In one study, 40% of women with physical disabilities reported being sexually assaulted (*Young, Nosek, Howland, Chanpong and Rintala, 1997*). As with physical assault, males with disabilities are twice as likely as their counterparts without disabilities to be sexually abused in their lifetime.

For the year 2000, the Wisconsin Report on Elder Abuse found that 19.4% of abused elders had a physical disability. (For more information, visit www.dhfs.state.wi.us/aging/elderabuse.)

If you or someone you know is at risk, two new publications offer advice on self-protection. *Safety Planning: A Guide for Individuals with Physical Disabilities* is designed to help adults who have been or may be abused. The booklet discusses what to do during a violent incident, what you need if you decide to leave your home, how to get a restraining order, and other topics. It's available from the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence; 307 S. Paterson Street, Suite 1; Madison, Wisconsin 53703. You can reach them by phone at 608/255-0539 (voice and TTY).

Transcending Silence presents information about the rights of sexual assault victims, how to report caregiver misconduct, and how to recognize physical and behavioral indicators of assault. The booklet is published by the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc.; 600 Williamson Street, Suite N-2; Madison, Wisconsin 53703. You can contact them by phone at 608/257-1516 (voice and TTY), or you can visit their web site at www.wcasa.org.